

FATION.

DDRESSEE LINE. *CAE*

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1		4		7	
2		5		8	
3		6		9	

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 OMF 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
 PAGE OF PAGES 1

CLASSIFICATION

SECRET

MESSAGE HANDLING INDICATOR

DATE-TIME GROUP

CITE

MESSAGE REFERENCE NUMBER

STAFF

DIRECTOR

CONF:

INFO: FILE

INDEX DISSEM BY:

NO INDEX

RETURN TO PER

IF FILE #

TO: IMMEDIATE SAIGON.4

FOR MR. GEORGE CARVER FROM MR. BOB LAYTON.4

REF:

1. THE CIA/DIA ESTIMATES OF THE OB OF COMMUNIST AND SVN

COMBAT FORCES GIVEN DO NOT ACCURATELY REFLECT COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS --
 ONLY AVERAGE ASSIGNED STRENGTHS IN ORGANIZED UNITS. GIVEN THE
 STATE OF COLLECTION AND THE FLUIDITY OF THE MILITARY SITUATION,
 OB DATA CAN AT BEST BE VIEWED ONLY AS A ROUGH APPROXIMATION FOR
 ANY POINT IN TIME. THEY WILL NOT REFLECT EITHER COMBAT LOSSES OR
 REPLACEMENTS IN A TIMELY MANNER. IN ADDITION, COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS
 WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON QUALITATIVE FACTORS THAT CANNOT BE EXPRESSED
 NUMERICALLY.4

2. DATA ON COMMUNIST OB ARE ALSO INSUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE

SEPARATE ESTIMATES ONLY ONE MONTH APART. FOR EXAMPLE, INFORMATION
 RECEIVED DURING THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS INDICATES THAT TWO INFANTRY
 DIVISIONS FROM THE NORTH DEPLOYED INTO MRS 2 AND 3 OF SVN
 UNDETECTED BETWEEN LATE JANUARY AND THE FIRST OF MARCH. IN

DATE: 31 MARCH 1975
 ORIG: BELAYTON
 UNIT: ACTING NIO/SSEA
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OUTGOING MESSAGE

1		4		7	
2		5		8	
3		6		9	

SIGNAL CENTER USE ONLY
AGE COI ACP TOG TPE MRO
OMF 0 0 0 0 0 0

PAGE OF PAGES

2

CLASSIFICATION

SECRET

MESSAGE HANDLING INDICATOR

DATE-TIME GROUP

CITE

MESSAGE REFERENCE NUMBER

CONF:

INFO: FILE

0

INDEX

DISSEM BY:

0

NO INDEX

0

RETURN TO

PER

0

IP FILES

#

ADDITION, THE 200,000 FIGURE DOES NOT YET INCLUDE HANOI'S COMMITMENT OF AT LEAST ONE MORE INFANTRY DIVISION PLUS SEVERAL AIR DEFENSE REGIMENTS WHICH ARE NOW MOVING TOWARD SVN. UPON ARRIVAL, THESE UNITS ALONE WILL ADD ANOTHER 10,000 TROOPS TO THE ORDER OF BATTLE.

COMMUNIST REGULAR COMBAT FORCES IN SVN:

	28 JAN 1973	1 APR 1975
MR 1	72,000	85,000
MR 2	25,000	51,000
MR 3	25,000	38,000
MR 4	27,000	26,000
TOTAL	149,000	200,000

3. FIGURES ON GOVERNMENT COMBAT FORCES SUFFER FROM MANY OF THE SAME WEAKNESSES AS COMMUNIST STRENGTH ESTIMATES AND DO NOT PORTRAY COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS. THE MOST REVEALING GAUGE IN THE FOLLOWING TABLES OF THE RECENT DISINTEGRATION OF ARVN UNITS IS THE COMPARISON OF THE 210,000 ARVN/VNMC FORCES ON 1 MARCH 1975 WITH THE CURRENT 134,000 STRENGTH -- A DECLINE OF OVER 36 PERCENT.

DATE:

ORIG:

UNIT:

EXT:

OUTGOING MESSAGE

1		4		7	
2		5		8	
3		6		9	

SIGNAL CENTER USE ONLY

AGE COI ACP TOG TPE MRO

OMF 0 0 0 0 0 0

PAGE OF PAGES

CLASSIFICATION

3

SECRET

MESSAGE HANDLING INDICATOR

DATE-TIME GROUP

CITE

MESSAGE REFERENCE NUMBER

CONF:

INFO: FILE

0 INDEX DISSEM BY:

0 NO INDEX

0 RETURN TO PER

0 IP FILES #

THE 1 APRIL ESTIMATE IS PRELIMINARY, PENDING RECEIPT OF THE MONTHLY
DAO REPORT ON THE ASSIGNED STRENGTHS OF GVN UNITS.4
RVNAF REGULAR COMBAT FORCES:4

28 JANUARY 19734

	RF BTNS.	ARVN/VNMC	TOTAL4
MR 1	16,000	81,000	97,000
MR 2	28,000	48,000	76,000
MR 3	32,000	54,000	86,000
MR 4	48,000	53,000	101,0004
TOTAL	124,000	236,000	360,0004

1 MARCH 19754

	RF BTNS.	ARVN/MARINE	TOTAL4
MR 1	22,000	74,000	96,000
MR 2	35,000	43,000	78,000
MR 3	39,000	51,000	90,000
MR 4	49,000	42,000	91,0004
TOTAL	145,000	210,000	355,0004

1 RVNAF REGULAR COMBAT FORCES:4

DATE:

ORIG:

UNIT:

EXT:

OUTGOING MESSAGE

1		4		7	
2		5		8	
3		6		9	

SIGNAL CENTER USE ONLY
 AGE COI ACP TOG TPE MRO
 0MF 0 0 0 0 0 0
 PAGE 4 OF 4

CLASSIFICATION

SECRET

MESSAGE HANDLING INDICATOR

DATE-TIME GROUP

CITE

MESSAGE REFERENCE NUMBER

CONF:

INFO: FILE

☐ INDEX DISSEM BY:
☐ NO INDEX
☐ RETURN TO PER
☐ IP FILES #

1 APRIL 1975

	RF BTNS.	ARVN	TOTAL
MR 1	-	-	-
MR 2	35,000	30,000	65,000
MR 3	38,000	62,000	100,000
MR 4	48,000	42,000	90,000
TOTAL*	121,000	134,000	255,000

(* DOES NOT INCLUDE SOME 15,000 ARVN/MARINE TROOPS REPORTEDLY EVACUATED SUCCESSFULLY FROM DANANG.)

4. WE CANNOT RECREATE DAO'S 59,000 FIGURES FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT COMBAT TROOPS OR THE 152,000 ASCRIBED TO THE COMMUNIST FORCES. IN GENERAL, GVN UNITS IN MR 2 ARE COMBAT INEFFECTIVE. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT MOST GVN UNITS IN MRS 3 AND 4 ARE STILL CAPABLE OF FIGHTING EFFECTIVELY. ON THE COMMUNIST SIDE VIRTUALLY ALL UNITS ARE ESTIMATED TO BE COMBAT EFFECTIVE. E2 IMPDET.

C/OPS/INT

C/VNO

DATE: 31 MARCH 1975
 ORIG: BELAYTON
 UNIF: ACTING NIO/SSEA